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McHenry, Kenosha County Leaders Come Together to Pledge Support for Proposed Trail

WILMOT, Wis. – The governments of McHenry County, Illinois, and Kenosha County, Wisconsin, are working across the border to create a new bike and pedestrian trail to link them together.

Representatives from both counties came together in Wilmot today to formally kick off the initiative to build the Midwest Interstate Trail. County officials were joined by representatives of both states' governments to support securing the needed funding for the public-private venture.

“McHenry and Kenosha counties take pride not only in their open spaces, but also the innumerable ways that residents and visitors have to enjoy them – such as our great respective networks of hiking, biking and walking paths,” McHenry County Board Chairman Michael Buehler, R-Crystal Lake, said. “We’re very enthusiastic about uniting them through the Midwest Interstate Trail, and the possibilities it will open for both of our counties.”

The proposed trail will connect the existing bike trail systems of both counties. The Kenosha County Division of Parks manages 16 miles of paved pathways, 23 miles of multi-use and hiking trails, and 13 miles of purpose-built mountain bike trails. The McHenry County Conservation District manages more than 45 miles of trails.

“I’m pleased that we’re able to partner with our neighbors to the south on this link between our communities,” Kenosha County Executive Samantha Kerkman said. “Kenosha County is the gateway to Wisconsin, and I look forward to working with on this long-term vision that will make it easier and safer for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross the state line in both directions.”

Funding is being sought from both states, and federal sources, to pay for phases of the project before any work moves forward.

Also attending Thursday’s ceremony were representatives from Thelen Sand and Gravel, which has pledged to donate a significant portion of the land to cover 8 miles of the trail.

Founded in 1947, and with locations in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin, Thelen Sand and Gravel is one of the Chicago area's largest family-owned aggregate and organic soil manufacturers.

"The Thelen Family remains committed to the communities that we serve, and we're excited about this opportunity for public-private collaboration to build a regional trail system," company President Steve Thelen said. "We are proud to work with McHenry County and Kenosha County, as well as the villages of Twin Lakes, Fox Lake and Spring Grove, to provide easements for a multi-use trail that will offer recreational activities, as well as economic opportunities, to help each of these communities thrive for generations to come."

To receive updates on the project, be sure to follow McHenry County on social media and subscribe to its McH Thrive e-newsletter by visiting www.mchenrycountyil.gov/social. In Kenosha County, updates are available on the Kenosha County Parks Facebook and Instagram feeds and on the Kenosha County Parks web app at <https://www.kenoshacounty.org/parksapp>.

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